

TOP Info Sheet – Talent Opportunities Program

Talent Opportunities (TOP) Student Subsidy Program

Ontario Chamber of Commerce's Talent Opportunities Program (TOP) application portal is now open for the Summer 2024 (May to August) term. [https:// occ.ca/talent-opportunities-program/](https://occ.ca/talent-opportunities-program/)



TOP Background: TOP is an initiative of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) designed to **help employers located anywhere in Canada hire college and university students** on WIL placements.

- **Employers gain access to a broad pool of student talent**, helping meet business needs and growing their talent pipeline.
- Eligible employers hiring **eligible students** will **receive a wage subsidy up to 50% (max \$5,000) or 70% of the wages (max. \$7,000)** for each placement for individuals from under-represented groups - see Program Guidelines. Please note that there is a limited pool of funding to support subsidies at the 70% level. Should funding be exhausted, a subsidy at the 50% level will be considered.
- TOP is funded through the Government of Canada's **Student Work Placement Program (SWPP)** which includes similar programs, but **TOP is generally broader and more flexible**.

TOP Canadian Employers: Registered Canadian businesses and not-for-profit organizations are encouraged to apply.

- **Employers hire and pay the student for the duration of the placement**, after which TOP wage subsidies are administered and paid.
- Employers ensure work **placements are not subsidized by any other federal funding** program.
- Located anywhere in Canada, **eligible employers may operate in almost any industry sector** (exclusions include large financial sector employers, governments, hospitals and post-secondary institutions - see Program Guidelines).
- Employers ensure they meet the **“net-new” criteria for support**, which is determined by subtracting the number of students hired in the fiscal year (April 1 to March 31) prior to first receiving SWPP funding (through TOP or any SWPP partner), known as the baseline number, from the number of students the employer is intending to hire in the current fiscal year. **Only placements above the baseline number of students hired are eligible for funding**. The Calculator in the TOP Application portal will help employers determine this number.

TOP Info Sheet – Talent Opportunities Program

TOP Students: domestic students registered in a recognized Canadian post-secondary institution, in any program of study (full-time and part-time) where a **work-integrated learning (WIL) component** (i.e., co-op, internship/work placement) is part of their study plan.

- Eligible students are **Canadian citizens, permanent residents, or persons to whom refugee protection has been conferred** under the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (**Note:** international students are not eligible).

TOP Path to Subsidy: Employers create a profile and begin the application on the OCC website here: occ.ca/talent-opportunities-program/

- Once employers **complete a successful application**, the application will be put on the waitlist,
- The application is then **assigned to a TOP Reviewer**, who will confirm the documents submitted meet TOP criteria and **guide the employer through the final steps**,
- Once all criteria are met, the **employer is sent a Recipient Agreement**, for their review and signature, outlining the subsidy and conditional approval terms,
- **After returning the signed Recipient Agreement, the Reviewer collects pay stubs** (first and final, when available),
- **Final documents** such as the final pay stubs and exit surveys will be **collected at the end of the work term** and then an Award Letter will be sent confirming subsidy value,
- Once the **Award Letter is returned with an invoice, payment is made** subsequently.

With guidance from the **TOP Program Guide and FAQs** and online application portal available here <https://occ.ca/talent-opportunities-program/>, employers are responsible for ensuring they meet TOP criteria, hire an eligible student and provide all documentation.

TOP Support: for more information, **email the TOP Team** at top@occ.ca or visit <https://occ.ca/talent-opportunities-program/> to apply.

